



Seasons greetings and happy holidays from Erie County Senior Services!

Christmas is right around the corner and we want to make sure you are prepared for it all. A popular and traditional way that many people stay connected to their family and friends is to send out an annual Christmas card. Sending out a short note to someone during the holidays can help your loved ones feel important, cared for and loved. Here are a few tips to help write those Christmas cards and get them in the mail before December 25th. We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year!

- **Make sure you have enough Christmas cards to go around.** Plan on ordering extra cards just in case. An extra 20 or so will do the trick. This will ensure that you have extra in case any are ruined, lost, or if you remember more friends or family to send cards to in the future.
- **Keep an ongoing Christmas mailing list.** If you update it throughout the year, it will be easier the following year to stay on track and get all the cards mailed on time. You also won't find yourself panicked during the Holidays and scrambling to find addresses.
- **Keep the messages short and sweet.** While you should make sure that all important information is there, try to exclude any frivolous sentiments. Just write what matters to you and the person receiving the card.

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University Express



Greetings from University Express! Our fall semester is winding down now. We hope you enjoyed yourself! Head over to our website (erie.gov/ue) to access our class recordings. There are over 150 on there!

Are you on our email list? [Be sure to join so you can keep up with the latest news!](#) We are planning a few virtual things for the winter season and will blast out the information when it is finalized.

Our virtual book club and virtual trivia group are looking for new members! Email the Coordinator Katie Earl at Katherine.earl@erie.gov for more information. We would love to have you join us!

Looking to learn about something in particular? Tell us! Call Katie at 716-858-7605 with your ideas.

Stay well!

{ RSVP }

In volunteering and in life, some find it hard to say no when they are asked to help. In many cases, it doesn't become a problem. Volunteers tend to choose organizations and causes that they are passionate about and they are often happy to say yes! However, there can be a dark side to volunteering—burnout. Burnout is defined as the physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress. Because of the passion volunteers feel, they can be at risk for burnout, especially around the holidays. For this month's newsletter, we want to focus on recognizing the signs of burnout, ideas for addressing burnout, and how to prevent burnout moving forward!

So how do you know if you're burned out? Well, maybe on mornings when you're scheduled to volunteer it feels harder to get out of bed than usual. Maybe you feel extra tired at the end of a volunteer shift. You may snap at staff, other volunteers, or even clients while volunteering, or feel impatient with tasks you used to enjoy. Burnout can also manifest as having a hard time concentrating, not feeling a sense of satisfaction from your work, or even experiencing physical symptoms such as unexplained headaches or stomach problems.

If you hit this point, it's time to take action. Start by evaluating your existing commitments on your calendar and look for what "sparks joy" or what your absolute "must dos" are. You may want to take a step back from things that do not bring you joy and are detracting from things you actually enjoy doing. While stepping back from commitments can be challenging, powering through feeling burned out is not usually the best option. Volunteer coordinators would rather have a good volunteer take a break than leave! After you've taken care of shaking up your schedule, now it's time to schedule some time for self-care. Whether it's taking a walk with a friend, reading a book, or taking a nap, these allow you to recharge. You can't pour from an empty cup, so make sure to do the things that refill you! When you're feeling recharged, you can think back to the things that brought you to volunteering in the first place and examine what led you to becoming burned out. Maybe certain volunteer assignments are stressful and don't bring satisfaction. Maybe you're overcommitted and giving too much time.

Moving forward, preventing burnout is key. Practice saying no to things that are putting too much stress on your schedule or that you do not want to do. Volunteering should be something that brings you happiness and satisfaction, so if it is no longer doing so give yourself permission to take a break or a step back. Make sure that you communicate with your volunteer coordinator at the organization, and be empowered to share your feedback and feelings! Part of their job is to ensure that your needs are being met as best as possible, too. If there are things you can advocate for that would make your volunteering easier, chances are it will make the organization's overall volunteering experience better for everyone.

With the ongoing pandemic pressures and the increased needs in our community, it can be harder than ever for volunteers to make sure they are taking care of themselves. All of us at Erie County RSVP appreciate your service, and appreciate you!



Recipe of the Month

Tuna Noodle Casserole



Ingredients

- Cooking spray, or unsalted butter, for greasing
- 4 cups medium egg noodles, cooked and drained
- 2 cans condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 2 cups cooked green peas
- 2 cans tuna, drained and flaked
- 1/2 cup milk
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup soft breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Instructions

1. Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. Spray a 2 1/2- to 3-quart casserole dish with cooking spray.
3. Combine the noodles, soup, peas, tuna, and milk. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper. Spoon into the prepared baking dish.
4. In a small bowl, toss the breadcrumbs with the melted butter and sprinkle over the top of the casserole.
5. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until hot and bubbly and the breadcrumbs are browned.
6. Serve and enjoy.



The infographic is titled "MyPlate Holiday makeover" and features a central illustration of a holiday meal: a roasted turkey on a platter, a bowl of fruit salad, a bowl of green beans, a pitcher of water with lemon, and a plate of bread. Above the title is a MyPlate diagram with a fork and knife. The background is decorated with colorful autumn leaves at the top and snowflakes at the bottom.

visit **choosemyplate.gov** for healthier options during the holidays

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| <p>tweak the sweets</p>  <p>fruits make delicious desserts</p> | <p>cheers to good health</p>  <p>drink water to manage calories</p> |
| <p>bake healthier</p>  <p>use recipes with pureed fruits instead of butter or oil</p> | <p>spice it up</p>  <p>use spices and herbs instead of sugar and salt</p> |
| <p>brighten your meal</p>  <p>fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables</p> | <p>skim the fat</p>  <p>try skim evaporated milk instead of heavy cream</p> |
| <p>swap the grains</p>  <p>choose whole wheat flour instead of white flour</p> | <p>go easy on the gravy</p>  <p>a little bit of gravy goes a long way</p> |

Combating Social Isolation: Online Volunteering



Wildwatch Kenya- Identify animals and their behaviors in photographs to help scientists understand biodiversity in Kenya.

Smithsonian- Transcribe or review transcriptions of documents that are important to American History!

CLUB 99

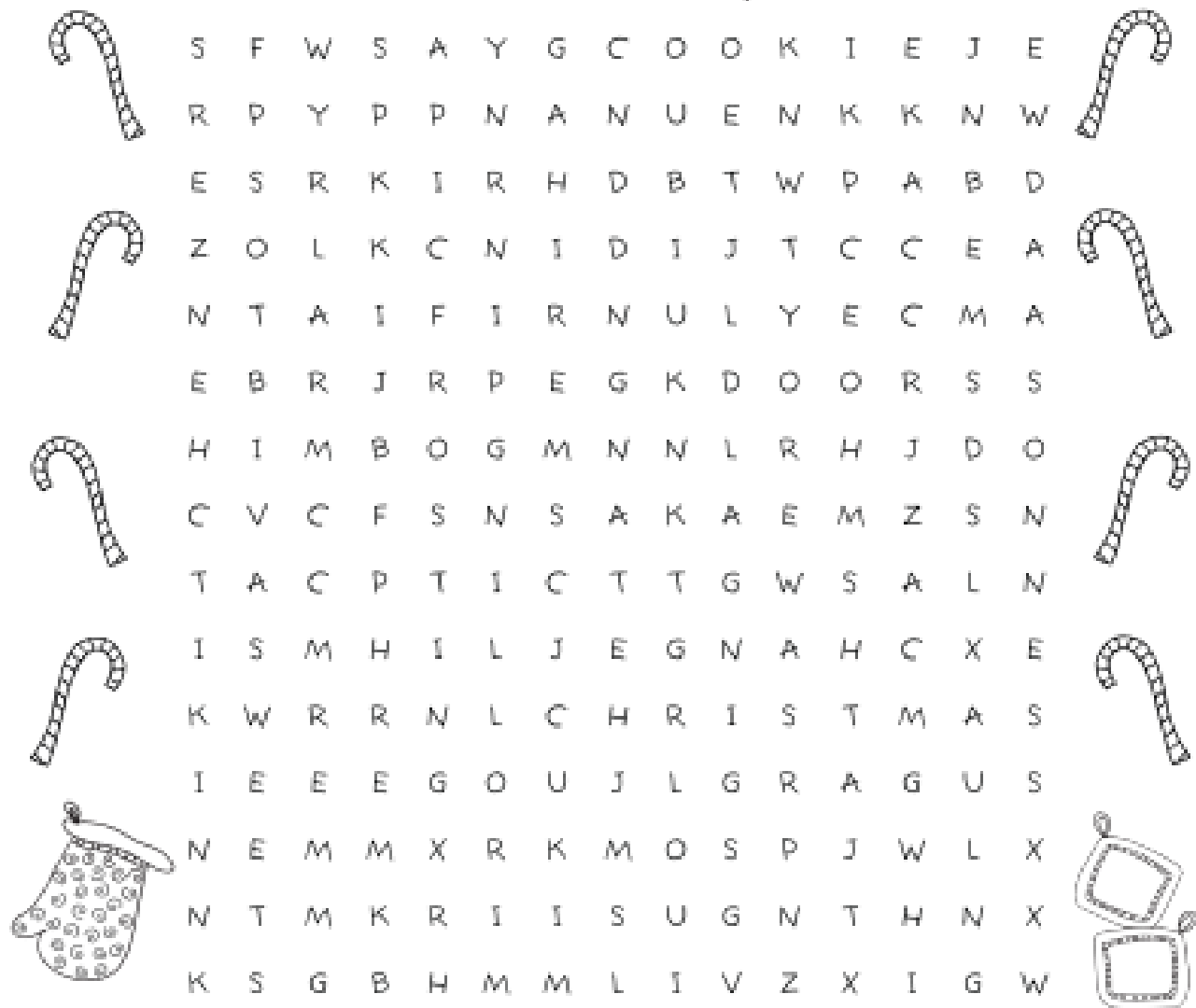
Look out for Erie County Senior Services **premier** exercise program at local senior centers across Erie County. We offer both **virtual** and **in person** classes. The **in person** class time and dates vary depending on the center. The **virtual** class is held Monday-Friday at 9am-10am. Classes include resistance band exercises, cardio, stretching and use of small exercise ball.

All 60 plus are welcome to join in. The side effects of regular exercise are: improved sleep, increase in blood circulation, improved heart health, increase in confidence, weight loss or maintenance, increased flexibility and overall increase in health and well-being. If you have any questions please contact Julie Ruszala 858-6403 julie.ruszala@erie.gov.



Holiday Baking

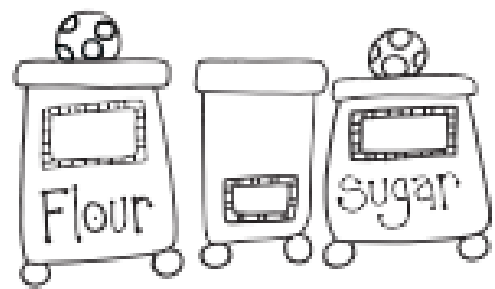
Word Search



baking
candy cane
Christmas
holiday
apron
kitchen

sugar
mixer
frosting
cookie
cutter
cake

decorate
sprinkles
rolling pin
exchange
sweets
parchment



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